

The Mercy of God Almighty, Part 6 - Romans 9:19-21 – August 12th, 2012

- Today's teaching will be part six of a series I've titled; "The Mercy of God Almighty." Before we start, I have to confess something to you.
- Commencing with this expositional teaching here in Romans 9 was sort of overwhelming and even intimidating especially after Romans 8.
- I have to confess that I can't even begin to imagine not having done an in depth study of this chapter because of the questions it answers.

- I suppose in all fairness, I've always known what the answers were, but if it wasn't for this chapter, I'm not so sure I'd also had known why.
- I've always known the "right answers" to those "difficult questions" in the Bible, but now, I'm much more able to articulate why they're right.
- Be that as it may and suffice it to say the question before us today, is one for which the Lord has ministered to me in a very powerfully way.

Do we have the right to question God? (Verses 19-21)

(19) One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" (20) But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" (21) Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

- v19 Paul anticipates the question that he knows one would ask of him saying; "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists His will?"
- v20 Paul asks who do you think you are talking back to God? Does what's formed say to Him who formed it, why did you make me like this?
- v21 He says, doesn't the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble use and some for common use?

- Before we begin answering this question and the other questions that come packaged with it we first need to know why Paul quotes Isaiah.

Isaiah 29:16 NIV You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "He did not make me"? Can the pot say of the potter, "He knows nothing"?

- The reason Paul brings the potter-clay illustration into the discussion is because it demonstrates how that they had turned it upside down.
- In other words they had it completely backwards, which is why all the questions we've answered here-to-fore had to be turned right side up.
- It's for this reason that Paul ever so bluntly rebukes them for thinking that the clay can question the potter as to why he's made this way.

- This is akin to one blaming God for the way He made them, which implies that it's not their fault, it's just the way they are. I am who I am.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that this mindset lends itself to the attitude of why even bother trying, I was born this way, it's no use.
- This is again a subtle satanic lie from the father of lies who deceives people into believing that they aren't to blame, thus they blame God.

- This explains why it is that for some people, God is the one on trial, not them, and to make matters worse, the jury is still out on God's guilt.
- Actually, there's nothing new under the sun, in that this is exactly what the serpent succeeded in doing in the garden. He turned it around.
- God was the one Who was to blame. He was the one Who was guilty of holding out on Adam and Eve by not wanting them to be gods too.

- It's for this reason that the Apostle Paul, true to form, bluntly blasts them by saying who do you as mere man think you are to question God.
- You are but clay, and how dare the clay question the goodness of the potter by hinting that somehow the potter was evil and the clay good.
- I can't get over how hellish this demonic deception plays out today in a myriad of ways exactly like it did starting with Lucifer in the garden.

- So much so that all one has to do is merely insinuate, vis-à-vis some rumor, that someone is guilty of something, and to us, they're guilty.
- By way of an example, one can anonymously cast an aspersion that so and so is committing adultery and they'll become guilty as charged.
- The onus is on the one who has been the recipient of the malicious and slanderous accusation because they're guilty until proven innocent.

- I find it most interesting how this study here in Romans has this parallel principle found in our Thursday night study in the book of Joshua.

Joshua 22:10-12 (10) And when they came to the region of the Jordan which *is* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great, impressive altar. **(11)** Now the children of Israel heard *someone* say, "Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel's side." **(12)** And when the children of Israel heard *of it*, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.

- This great and impressive altar will cause serious problems such that it becomes a source of contention and division, and false accusation.
- Notice they base their declaration of war against their own brethren solely on the basis of what they heard, giving no thought to the truth.
- The truth of the matter is, they didn't build it to worship false gods rather it was built both for a commemoration and for the next generation.

- Again, it's turned upside down, when it should be the other way around. It's not guilty until proven innocent; it's innocent until proven guilty.
- Sadly, this is what the clay has done with the potter, and so too is this what some people have done with God. God is now guilty of evil.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment as I share with you what the Lord ministered to me in and through our text here in Romans.

- In order to do that, I'll need to talk about our daughter Noelle, who as I'm sure most of you know, died as an infant at four months of age.
- I trust you won't tire of my sharing about what God did during this painful time in our lives, as the impact on this church was most profound.
- Let me explain, many times we were arguably justified in our questioning of God as to why it is that He would allow our daughter to die.

- However, the question got turned right side up when the Lord showed me that had He first come to me and asked me, I'd have said yes!
- Had the Potter asked this clay if it were OK to give us a daughter to love and to hold for only a very brief and painful time, I'd have said yes!
- As a matter of fact, as painful as it was, and sometimes still is, I can't even begin to imagine my life without having had my daughter Noelle.

- I'll close my sermon with a question as a take away of sorts, have you been the recipient of something that's caused you to question God?
- If so, I want to encourage you to turn the question around. Get it right side up under the banner of the Potter being only and always good.
- Would to God that we would be like Job and say; "though He slay me, yet will I praise Him." Why? Because He is worthy of all my praise!